IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims as follows:

1. (Previously Presented) An image processing apparatus for hierarchically compressing and coding image data by subjecting pixel values of the image data to a discrete wavelet transform, quantization and coding for each of one or a plurality of rectangular regions into which the image data is divided, the image processing apparatus comprising:

a hierarchical coding unit to compress and code the image data in a state where the image data is divided for each hierarchical layer, to obtain compressed codes, wherein the hierarchical coding unit comprises:

a first-level coding unit to receive the image data and to create the compressed codes of a first hierarchical layer; and

a second-level coding unit to receive a sub-band of the first hierarchical layer from the first-level coding unit and to create the compressed codes of a second hierarchical layer, wherein the second hierarchical layer is a lower hierarchical layer than the first hierarchical layer; and

a distributively storing unit to distributively store the compressed codes that are divided for each hierarchical layer by the hierarchical coding unit, wherein the distributively storing unit comprises:

a first-level storing unit to store the compressed codes of the first hierarchical layer; and

a second-level storing unit to separately store the compressed codes of the second hierarchical layer from the compressed codes of the first hierarchical layer, wherein the second-level storing unit is physically separate from the first-level storing unit.

2. (Previously Presented) An image processing apparatus for hierarchically compressing and coding image data by subjecting pixel values of the image data to a discrete wavelet transform, quantization and coding for each of one or a plurality of rectangular regions into which the image data is divided, the image processing apparatus forming an electronic equipment which is coupled to a network having other electronic equipments coupled thereto, and comprising:

a hierarchical coding unit to compress and code the image data in a state where the image data is divided for each hierarchical layer, to obtain compressed codes; and

a distributively storing unit to distributively store the compressed codes for each hierarchical layer separately by hierarchical layer into a storage unit of each of the other electronic equipments.

3. (Previously Presented) An image processing apparatus for hierarchically compressing and coding image data by subjecting pixel values of the image data to a discrete wavelet transform, quantization and coding for each of one or a plurality of rectangular regions into which the image data is divided, the image processing apparatus comprising:

hierarchical coding means for compressing and coding the image data in a state where the image data is divided for each hierarchical layer, to obtain compressed codes, wherein the hierarchical coding means creates compressed codes for a first hierarchical layer and creates compressed codes for a second hierarchical layer; and

distributively storing means for distributively storing the compressed codes that are divided for each hierarchical layer by the hierarchical coding means, wherein the distributively storing means comprises:

means for storing the compressed codes of the first hierarchical layer; and

means for storing the compressed codes of the second hierarchical layer separately from the compressed codes of the first hierarchical layer.

4. (Previously Presented) An image processing apparatus for hierarchically compressing and coding image data by subjecting pixel values of the image data to a discrete wavelet transform, quantization and coding for each of one or a plurality of rectangular regions into which the image data is divided, the image processing apparatus forming an electronic equipment which is coupled to a network having other electronic equipments coupled thereto, and comprising:

hierarchical coding means for compressing and coding the image data in a state where the image data is divided for each hierarchical layer, to obtain compressed codes; and

distributively storing means for distributively storing the compressed codes for each hierarchical layer separately by hierarchical layer into storage means of each of the other electronic equipments.

5. (Previously Presented) An image processing apparatus for hierarchically compressing and coding image data by subjecting pixel values of the image data to a discrete wavelet transform, quantization and coding for each of one or a plurality of rectangular regions into which the image data is divided, the image processing apparatus comprising:

a rectangular region coding unit to compress and code the image data in a state where the image data is divided for each rectangular region, to obtain compressed codes, wherein the rectangular region coding unit creates compressed codes for a first rectangular region and creates compressed codes for a second rectangular region; and

a distributively storing unit to distributively store the compressed codes that are divided for each rectangular region by the rectangular region coding unit, wherein the distributively storing unit comprises:

a first storing unit to store the compressed codes of the first rectangular region; and

a second storing unit to separately store the compressed codes of the second rectangular region from the compressed codes of the first rectangular region, wherein the second storing unit is physically separate from the first storing unit.

6. (Original) The image processing apparatus as claimed in claim 5, wherein the rectangular region coding unit compresses and codes the image data with a decomposition level dependent on a type of the image data, a type of region of the image data, a type of source electronic equipment of the image data or, an external instruction.

7. (Previously Presented) An image processing apparatus for hierarchically compressing and coding image data by subjecting pixel values of the image data to a discrete wavelet transform, quantization and coding for each of one or a plurality of rectangular regions into which the image data is divided, the image processing apparatus forming an electronic equipment which is coupled to a network having other electronic equipments coupled thereto, and comprising:

a rectangular region coding unit to compress and code the image data in a state where the image data is divided for each rectangular region, to obtain compressed codes; and

a distributively storing unit to distributively store the compressed codes for each rectangular region separately by rectangular region into a storage unit of each of the other electronic equipments.

8. (Original) The image processing apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein the rectangular region coding unit compresses and codes the image data with a decomposition level dependent on a type of the image data, a type of region of the image data, a type of source electronic equipment of the image data or, an external instruction.

9. (Previously Presented) An image processing apparatus for hierarchically compressing and coding image data by subjecting pixel values of the image data to a discrete wavelet transform, quantization and coding for each of one or a plurality of rectangular regions into which the image data is divided, the image processing apparatus comprising:

rectangular region coding means for compressing and coding the image data in a state where the image data is divided for each rectangular region, to obtain compressed codes, wherein the rectangular region coding means creates compressed codes for a first rectangular region and creates compressed codes for a second rectangular region; and

distributively storing means for distributively storing the compressed codes that are divided for each rectangular region by the rectangular region coding means, wherein the distributively storing means comprises:

means for storing the compressed codes of the first rectangular region; and

means for storing the compressed codes of the second rectangular region separately from the compressed codes of the first rectangular region.

10. (Previously Presented) An image processing apparatus for hierarchically compressing and coding image data by subjecting pixel values of the image data to a discrete wavelet transform, quantization and coding for each of one or a plurality of rectangular regions into which the image data is divided, the image processing apparatus forming an electronic equipment which is coupled to a network having other electronic equipments coupled thereto, and comprising:

rectangular region coding means for compressing and coding the image data in a state where the image data is divided for each rectangular region, to obtain compressed codes; and

distributively storing means for distributively storing the compressed codes for each rectangular region separately by rectangular region into storage means of each of the other electronic equipments.

11. (Previously Presented) An article of manufacture comprising one or more recordable media having instructions stored thereon which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform an image data processing method for hierarchically compressing and coding image data by subjecting pixel values of the image data to a discrete wavelet transform, quantization and coding for each of one or a plurality of rectangular regions into which the image data is divided, the method comprising:

causing the computer to compress and code the image data in a state where the image data is divided for each hierarchical layer, to obtain compressed codes, wherein causing the computer to compress and code comprises:

creating the compressed codes of a first hierarchical layer; and

creating the compressed codes of a second hierarchical layer; and

causing the computer to distributively store the compressed codes which are divided for each hierarchical layer by the hierarchical coding procedure, wherein causing the computer to distributively store comprises:

storing the compressed codes of the first hierarchical layer; and

storing the compressed codes of the second hierarchical layer separately from the compressed codes of the first hierarchical layer.

12. (Previously Presented) An article of manufacture comprising one or more recordable media having instructions stored thereon which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform an image data processing method for hierarchically compressing and coding image data by subjecting pixel values of the image data to a discrete wavelet transform, quantization and coding for each of one or a plurality of rectangular regions into which the image data is divided, the computer forming an electronic equipment which is coupled to a network having other electronic equipments coupled thereto, the method comprising:

causing the computer to compress and code the image data in a state where the image data is divided for each hierarchical layer, to obtain compressed codes; and

causing the computer to distributively store the compressed codes for each hierarchical layer separately by hierarchical layer into a storage unit of each of the other electronic equipments.

13. (Previously Presented) An article of manufacture comprising one or more recordable media having instructions stored thereon which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform an image data processing method for hierarchically compressing and coding image data by subjecting pixel values of the image data to a discrete wavelet transform, quantization and coding for each of one or a plurality of rectangular regions into which the image data is divided, the method comprising:

causing the computer to compress and code the image data in a state where the image data is divided for each rectangular region, to obtain compressed codes, wherein the causing the computer to compress and code comprises:

creating compressed codes for a first rectangular region; and

creating compressed codes for a second rectangular region; and

causing the computer to distributively store the compressed codes which are divided for each rectangular region by the rectangular region coding procedure, wherein the causing the computer to distributively store comprises:

storing the compressed codes of the first rectangular region; and

storing the compressed codes of the second rectangular region separately from the compressed codes of the first rectangular region.

14. (Original) The article of manufacture as claimed in claim 13, wherein causing the computer to compress and code comprises causing the computer to compress and code the image data with a decomposition level dependent on a type of the image data, a type of region of the image data, a type of source electronic equipment of the image data or, an external instruction.

15. (Previously Presented) An article of manufacture comprising one or more recordable media having instructions stored thereon which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform an image data processing method for hierarchically compressing and coding image data by subjecting pixel values of the image data to a discrete wavelet transform, quantization and coding for each of one or a plurality of rectangular regions into which the image

data is divided, the computer forming an electronic equipment which is coupled to a network having other electronic equipments coupled thereto, the method comprising:

causing the computer to compress and code the image data in a state where the image data is divided for each rectangular region, to obtain compressed codes; and

causing the computer to distributively store the compressed codes for each rectangular region separately by rectangular region into a storage unit of each of the other electronic equipments.

16. (Original) The article of manufacture as claimed in claim 15, wherein causing the computer to compress and code comprises causing the computer to compress and code the image data with a decomposition level dependent on a type of the image data, a type of region of the image data, a type of source electronic equipment of the image data or, an external instruction.

17. (Previously Presented) An image processing apparatus for hierarchically compressing and coding image data by subjecting pixel values of the image data to a discrete wavelet transform, quantization and coding for each of one or a plurality of rectangular regions into which the image data is divided, the image processing apparatus comprising:

a hierarchical coding unit to compress and code the image data in a state where the image data is divided for each hierarchical layer, to obtain compressed codes, wherein the hierarchical coding unit comprises:

a first-level coding unit to receive the image data and to create the compressed codes of a first hierarchical layer; and

a second-level coding unit to receive a sub-band of the first hierarchical layer from the first-level coding unit and to create the compressed codes of a second hierarchical layer, wherein the second hierarchical layer is a lower hierarchical layer than the first hierarchical layer; and

a distributively storing unit to distributively store the compressed codes that are divided for each hierarchical layer by the hierarchical coding unit, wherein the distributively storing unit comprises:

a first-level storing unit to only receive the compressed codes of the first hierarchical layer from the first-level coding unit and to store the compressed codes of the first hierarchical layer; and

a second-level storing unit to only receive the compressed codes of the second hierarchical layer from the second-level coding unit and to store the compressed codes of the second hierarchical layer.